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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF EDUCATION DENIES PA TEXTBOOKS CONTAIN INCITEMENT

Classified By: Consul General Daniel Rubinstein  
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) In a November 3 meeting, PA Minister of Education Lamis Alami argued that most of the incitement-related criticism levied against official PA textbooks cited out-of-date Egyptian and Jordanian textbooks, which the PA has since shelved or heavily edited. "The PA should be held accountable for the texts it has sponsored," she argued, "not for Egyptian or Jordanian texts no longer in use." She noted that current PA textbooks were available on the PA's website ([www.pcdc.edu.ps](http://www.pcdc.edu.ps) and [www.moe.gov.ps](http://www.moe.gov.ps)). "We are not hiding anything," she said. "Our textbooks are open for international review. But for some Israelis, we're all terrorists, and there is (Israeli) media reinforcement of this stereotype."

¶2. (C) Alami said that despite allegations in the Israeli media that PA textbooks contained incitement, the PA had "not received one official complaint" from the GOI regarding written material currently in the PA curriculum. "There are some who do not want us to discuss historical Palestine," she said. "And we're open to criticism. But let's be fair and objective. Are we to abdicate our right to a Palestinian heritage?" Alami noted that the over 50% of schools in East Jerusalem which are administered by the Israeli Ministry of Education or the Jerusalem Municipality purchased PA textbooks and used them in their official curriculum, "with the PA logo removed." UNRWA, Alami said, also used the PA curriculum, and textbooks donated by the PA, in its own schools.

¶3. (C) Asked about efforts to compare PA and Israeli textbooks, and their respective compliance with the Roadmap obligation to stop official incitement, Alami said, "We are open to cooperation, but expect fair treatment. A parallel review of Israeli textbooks is almost impossible, since their system is not centralized -- there are five different programs with over 10,000 textbooks used in their curriculum." She noted that the PA Ministry Of Education had recently formed a committee to review the whole of the PA curriculum for content, including teaching of gender issues, human rights, and democratic values, and that "our curriculum is broader than just our textbooks -- we have courses on human rights education, democracy, accountability, and transparency."

¶4. (SBU) Background: Current PA textbooks were developed during 1996-2006. Before that, West Bank schools taught a curriculum based on Jordanian textbooks, and Gaza schools taught a curriculum based on Egyptian textbooks. Since 1967, both curricula had been subject to review and censorship by Israeli military authorities. PA officials, among others, criticized a 2000 review of PA textbooks by the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace for basing its review on

un-revised Egyptian and Jordanian texts, and for citating them selectively. A 2004 review by the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information found that while PA textbooks were "generally conceived with a nationalist framework," the (new) curriculum reviewed did not feature overt exhortation to violence.

RUBINSTEIN